

IRISH INDEPENDENCE;

OR THE

POLICY

OF



U N I O N.

Interest is a sure guide to nations, and it never was, nor never can be the interest of the smaller number to differ from the larger, or the weaker to differ from the more powerful.

Right Hon. John Foster.

Dublin :

PRINTED BY J. MILLIKEN 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1806.

08-579

INTRODUCTION.



I SHALL preface the following observations on *Irish Independency* and the *Policy of Union*, with the sentiments of two great and leading characters respecting what is called *the working* of the constitution of 1782.—In MR. GRATTAN we have the founder of the system, and it is to be presumed he understands the principle of his own creation, and what ought to be the practice.—In MR. FOSTER we have the defender of that system and its operation. The reader will find that the Founder and the Defender entertain very opposite sentiments on *the effect*; and when such men disagree in opinion, he will, if he is not morose, pardon the effort and errors of an individual,

individual, [whose only aim is to unveil the evil (for evil there unquestionably is) and with a boldness not meaning to offend, but perhaps inspired by the energy of the subject, impress the remedy.—The question of a Legislative Union is of so important a nature, as to awaken the feeling of every thinking man in the community:—The human mind, like the human body, is various—we are not all blessed with genius or with beauty—a perfect freedom of discussion is necessary to call forth what we have of the one, as a becoming ease and liberty are necessary to shew the graces of the other.

Let us now, by way of introduction, to the succeeding pages, produce MR. GRAT-TAN and MR. FOSTER on the subject of Constitution, Parliament, and Independence.

MR.

MR. GRATTAN.

The birth of the borough inundation was the destruction of liberty—it is a court instrument that *murders freedom*.

The price of boroughs is from 14 to 16,000l.; this 14 or 16,000l. must ultimately be paid by you—thus things go on—it is impossible they can last—the *trade of Parliament ruins every thing*.

It is this increase of the price of boroughs which has increased the expence of your establishments, and this increase of your establishments which has increased the price of your boroughs; they operate alternately like cause and effect, and have within themselves the double principle of *rapid ruin*.

The recognition of our Parliamentary rights has been rendered abortive by *unexampled exertions of bribery and corruption*.

MR. FOSTER.

I state its perfection, talking of the constitution, to urge its value and its efficacy for *every end of happiness*.

—That country, whose safety at this instant is endangered by a theoretic proposal to reform the system—at the time that it is *working with ease and increasing benefit*.

—No—no—cherish the Parliament—all natives of one country—their stake is in it—their hearts as well as their interests are engaged in *its preservation—its prosperity—its glory*.

It is not your Constitution he (Mr. Pitt) wants to take away for any supposed imperfection, but because it keeps the purse of the nation in the *honest hands of an Irish Parliament*.

MR.

MR. GRATTAN.

The government agreed to the establishment of the independency of the Irish Parliament, and then created a multitude of offices to make *that independency a name.*

The famous *half million*, or the experiment of the castle to *secure the dependence of the Parliament.*

The *present Parliament* whose narrow and contracted representation *excludes liberty*, and whose *fatal compliances* have caused for a course of years a succession of measures which have collected upon us such an *accumulation of calamity!*

MR. FOSTER.

Preserve that Constitution which was confirmed to you in 1782; and which has given you wealth, trade, prosperity, *freedom*, and *independency.*

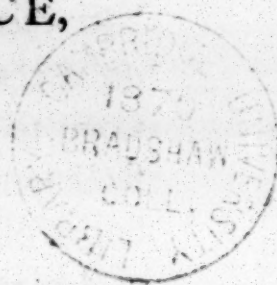
Adhere to the constitution of 1782; the *immense value* of which *every enquiry* into the *state of things* since, points out to you in every circumstance.

The Constitution of 1782 has not only *worked well* to promote the strength and energy of the empire, but to *raise this kingdom into prosperity*, and keep it in a steady and rapid advance even *beyond the utmost hopes of its warmest advocates!*

IRISH

IRISH INDEPENDENCE,

&c. &c.



IN taking a view of the question of *Union* the writer of the following pages may, by some persons, be thought to lean more to the *Roman Catholic* than is either just or politick; he can only say, that in looking into the state of this country he found the *Catholic* so prominent a feature that his attention was compelled, and for the reasons which he shall advance, he is penetrated with the justness of their claims, and, speaking as a member of the empire, with the *saving policy* of their *full emancipation*.

The writer is neither a bigot in religion or in politics; he hopes he looks with a clear and liberal eye on MAN; it is for *him* that religions are formed and polity established; it is for the *good of man* that his mind should be impressed with certain tenets leading to and compelling the moral duties; and that the licence of natural liberty be restrained

restrained within the honourable bounds of social order. Sparta was free, but she had her helots; Rome was free, but she had her slaves; Britain is free, but she has her negroes.—Can we say Ireland is free when she has her Catholics? The slave has the same right to liberty as his master; his motions may be directed by a superior force, but whenever he can he will rise, and assert the great charter of his nature; and who shall presume to censure his effort? It proceeds from a feeling marked upon his heart by the indelible finger of God! and therefore he is the best friend of Ireland, and the true friend of Britain, whose councils and exertions go to the destruction of that partial policy which feeds the fire that may consume the state.

The first safe step to that destruction is a legislative Union with Great Britain; without Union you cannot emancipate, and without emancipation there can be no real, efficient, operative, and indissoluble Union. If the British connexion is an advantage (and who but a fool or an incendiary would deny that it is?) union will secure it; if it is necessary to the existence of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, union will convert that necessity into a duty on the part of Great Britain; at present her aid is precarious, it lies at her own will—union would leave her no choice—she must defend *herself*. We are now distinct governments, under the same King! independent States, mutually dependent! Britain depends

depends in a great degree for her political safety on our connexion, and we depend upon her for our commercial existence—aye, and we owe the land on which we live to the protecting power of her fleets and armies—and yet we are told we are independent!—union will make us truly independent—it will shake off the necessity of our actual dependence on Great Britain, and raise us to the proud eminence of being equally free.

That there are many errors in this irregular essay is not to be doubted; the writer, however, hopes there will be found in it some useful truths:—he has thought it for the general good to speak those truths in simple plainness—it is a sore mind that shrinks from an honest statement of facts, and it is a rotten political establishment that cannot bear the touch-stone of free inquiry.

Union is a great question, its effect embraces every man on the land, and every man has a right, within the law, to give his opinion on the subject. Opposition says, Parliament is incompetent to enact the measure, but the very reverse is established by shewing where the English parliament did enact Union with Scotland, *which* formed the British parliament, *which* repealed the laws restraining Ireland, *which* made her theoretically free: now if parliament (I speak of the English, and ours is founded on the same principles) is incompetent to enact
union,

union, and has enacted union, every law flowing from that union is constitutionally null, and even the theoretical independence of Ireland is illegal. But Ireland triumphantly acceded to the British acts of repeal, and dates her freedom from them—parliament must therefore possess complete competency—our present constitution draws its being from that very principle.

The writer will be sparing of quotation—had he merely wished to *make a book* he might have swelled the page by applicable passages from Tacitus down to Hume; he might have scribbled French from Montesquieu, and been very profuse of law from Coke and from Blackstone; from the parterre of Burke, abundant in flowers! it were easy to have culled some rose with its recompanying thorn; and from his flashing adversary Thomas Paine* a thorn without its rose!—Quotation sometimes illustrates happily enough—but it is a heavy auxiliary, and seems fitter for the main body than for the light detachments of an army—the page has therefore been incumbered as little as possible with this sort of assistance.

* Thomas may be left to his own conscience; and it is to be hoped he will endeavour to dispel some of its murky gloom by comforting, if he can, his former friend the unfortunate *De la Fayette*, that great and virtuous sufferer for his KING and for his COUNTRY!

The

The writer has mentioned Sparta, and Rome, and Britain, and Ireland; he cannot avoid observing that the two first did not possess *true* liberty—for where a great portion of the people are kept in actual servitude, as was the case of the Spartan Helots and the Roman Slaves, there is no real and uncorrupted freedom; there may be a hard, a partial, and a state liberty, supported by the profanation of individual right, but *true liberty*, where every man is equal in the law, was not in Sparta or in Rome. Britain is at this moment in possession of as pure political liberty as a community can know;* the defects of her system may be pointed out *on paper*, but *in practice* she has all the possible perfection of a human institution, and by consequence she is individually more happy and collectively more powerful than any state in the world; it will be here understood that the writer has a reference to her extent and population.

What a contrast when we turn our eyes to Ireland! her people divided—discontented—now turbulent to phrensy—now sunk in the very sloth of apathy and indolence!—partial rights—partial feelings!—a country—no country!—theoretically free—in reality dependent!—the pomp of state—the beggary of the land!—society unhinged, and man regarding with doubt and apprehension the motions of his neighbour!—the

* This is strictly applicable to the *people* of Britain—the writer laments the slavery of the negroes under her government.

lower orders detesting the rich, and the rich breathing in fearful suspicion of the lower orders! Religious bigotry unwisely roused from its wholesome lethargy, and bursting into fanaticism!—Political bigotry nursing the folly and widening the breach;—discord—insecurity—plunder—murder! “try conciliation”—agreed—but how?—not a partial, and therefore an unavailing conciliation—Palliatives may mitigate, but they never radically cure—no—strike at the root of the disease—the restoring conciliation must be “broad and general as the casing air”—it must embrace *the whole*, and be lasting as the land; uniting man with man, and state with state; and securing by the enlightened policy of that glorious Union the political and civil liberty, the safety, the tranquillity, and the happiness of Ireland.

Popular clamour can neither establish or refute the political virtues of any meditated measure; if it could, the Union with Scotland would never have taken place, and the projected Union of Great Britain and Ireland would now have been in the “family vault of all the Capulets”—and if it had, both British connexion and legal liberty would soon have followed to the same tomb!

Our unhappy factions have distracted this land; our religious distinctions of Protestant and Catholic have led to persecution on the one part and to fanaticism on the other.—Merciful God! that Christians, at the close of the eighteenth century, should forget the benignant spirit of their founder,

founder, and destroy the root because the branches are different!—We have heard much of the infidelity of Voltaire and of Hume, but such civil horrors, between sects of the same religion, give deeper wounds to Christianity than all the sardonic sneers of the one, or the paradoxical reasoning of the other.

The gentlemen who stiled themselves Patriots had for some years rung such a peal in the public ear of corruption, reform, emancipation, &c. &c. that a portion of the people were brought to believe themselves very slaves, and to think that nothing would go well till his Majesty's ministers were turned out and the patriots turned in—how weak sighted is man! While this faction was labouring and abusing, not to destroy the government but to remove the ministers, it gave birth to another faction of a much more dangerous nature—The Catholic faction—this faction combined for *emancipation*, one of the cant words of the patriots, and for a while each countenanced the other, and went on, in their way, well enough: but the patriots, though full of fire, and eager to take the Treasury Bench by storm, were yet true to the British connexion, for under it they expected to flourish, and would at any time loudly join in the resolution to stand or fall with that country. The Catholics did not entirely relish this sort of conduct—they grew impatient, and, aided by a few hot-headed persons of no religion at all, they treated with the French Republic, in hopes, with the assistance of that unde-

figuring

signing and innocent government utterly to root from the land the British Oak, and fix in its place that democratic plant of Gallic growth, "whose taste is death, and whose fruit is not the fruit of knowledge."

What followed this leading step to French fraternity? an organized treason; then, but of numbers too weak to secure the state, a noble loyalty; then, open rebellion; then, British protection,—the subjugation of the French, and the crush of faction.

How did the patriots act during this awful period? did they with virtuous indignation throw aside their *petit querre* of political opposition, and assist the government to maintain the peace of the country? did they start forward with the energy of *true* patriotism, and enrol themselves in the yeomanry corps to repel the invasion of a foreign enemy?—no—some kept aloof from the assembled senate, and by a sulky silence abetted the views of faction—others said—"may the kingly power live for ever;"—"may the parliamentary constitution prosper,"—"may the connexion with Great Britain continue"—and "may the liberties of the people be immortal." They *spoke* to this purpose, and—withdrew—they abandoned the vessel of the state at the moment of her danger, and at least encouraged the storm by not lending a heart and hand to counteract its effects:—they became obnoxious to Solon's celebrated law, for their *neutrality* was criminal.

Is there in the circle of the land a man who with an unblushing front can contradict this statement?

ment? not one—or if there is, his mind must be blind to action, and his heart callous to truth.

Here let us pause—United in blood, united in language, united in constitution, the Anglo-Irish, while their government is distinct, can have no rational security against the workings of faction, because that very distinctness is the cradle in which democracy may rock the rickety offspring of her hopes and of her devotion: that very distinctness will impel the Protestant traitor to misguide the Catholic peasant, and to wheedle over to, at least, a culpable inaction, the wary Presbyterian: that distinctness, while it lasts, will be an inviting principle to the French Republic, (or to any power at enmity with Britain) and she will seize it, if it does last, to the utter ruin of Anglo-Irish, Protestant and Catholic.

Impressed with this great truth, I feel myself justified in obtruding my opinions upon the public; if my reasoning shall appear generally feeble, I consider it may in some parts be found strong and clear—as a rill is constricted by certain impediments, and then flows on with force. If it in any part is found strong it may convince, and my labour will have ample reward, if it convinces but one enemy to the measure, that a full, free and unequivocal Union with Great Britain is the only final settlement that can secure to Ireland the kingly power, the parliamentary guardianship, and the liberties of the people.

The Protestant will find me his friend, because I wish to lead him to the security of his possessions,

and to the continued enjoyment of his political ascendancy; the Catholic will find me his friend, because I wish to conduct him through the portal of peace into the temple of liberty; and the country will find me her friend, because I wish to do away every baneful distinction, so disgraceful to the period in which we live, and so dishonourable to the pure spirit of that constitution whose base is freedom, and whose arms should embrace every soil:—where there is safety there will be no exclusion, there will be general content; and where there is general content there will be no rebellion.

Something must be done;—in a state of civil bondage you cannot build upon the Catholic mind. —Throw France for a moment out of consideration, still our best policy is Union with Britain, and why?—because it is the only measure that can secure the connexion; without union you must, in your own defence, keep the Catholic at the door of the temple; he cannot remain there satisfied, because he has been taught this truth—that man is born with the same rights; without union, therefore, the Protestant interest must be in danger from the discontent and physical force of the Catholic: union with Britain would put the Protestant interest out of danger, because it would assimilate its strength with the strength of that mighty nation,—thus union would indubitably establish the political safety and ascendancy of the protestant—it would do more—it would open
the

the door of constitutional participation to the catholic:—thus security would be bound in the liberal chains of Freedom, and the united kingdoms would indeed stand and fall together.

When this great question was first promulgated, clamour, in the effervescence of its folly defeated the operations of reason; but clamour can never alter the nature of truth—party has had its day—the public mind has cooled, and is now open to the calm investigation of the subject.

Our constitution is the British constitution, with this main difference—we have no *distinct King*—the King of Great Britain being *necessarily** King of Ireland:—She is bound by no laws but what are passed by her own three branches, and thus she is *constitutionally* a distinct and independent state; it must however be confessed, that her King being *always an absentee*, being also the King of, it may be said, adjoining country, greater in every point of consideration, and that Ireland must therefore be governed *in reference* to Great Britain, her independence is more theoretical than real. Her King is directed by British ministers; all the great acts of state for Ireland originate in the British cabinet—it is therefore, the British cabinet that governs the kingdom of Ireland; and the British minister always has a representative in the Irish House of Commons to *manage* the affairs of the Irish nation!

Had

* “By this junction of the Crowns (says Mr. Foster, talking of Scotland) she became subject to foreign influence in all her national concerns.”

Had Ireland been placed on the central surface of the Atlantic ocean, she might have been a perfectly independent state; but nature having fixed her among the more potent powers of Europe, and the occurrences of time having blended with her original inhabitants, and rooted on her soil a large portion of the people of a neighbouring country, forming at least one-fourth of her present population, and naturally leaning to the parent power, the eye of reason cannot see a possibility of her maintaining a perfect political independence. France on one side, Great Britain on the other, it is the nature of power to become more powerful—it is the policy, and the best policy of Great Britain, to possess Ireland in amity; she does possess her, but it is a possession from distinct government eminently open to interruption, and assailable by party. Mourning for his credulity—bleeding for his rebellion, his eyes beginning to open to the fatal folly of French fraternity, the Irish peasant fits a sad and melancholy example of the effects of faction! It was the interest of France to encourage the spirit of discord, and invited by the distinctness of her government, it will be her eternal aim to wound Great Britain by the ruin of Ireland—the leading feature of French policy is to foment a contest of blood, that she may weaken and devour.

It must also be confessed, that in Ireland the religion of the state being protestant, and the religion of the people being Roman catholic, potently contributed to nourish the hopes of France
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against the British establishment. There are two leading religious and political parties (for alas! religion and politics are here unhappily blended) in this little island; the protestant possessing all the power of the state, and the Roman catholic, shorn of political power, but possessing three-fourths of the population of the land. The presbyterian is a collateral branch from the protestant, possessing neither political nor physical force comparable with the other two, but most respectable for its numbers, its industry, and its general decency of conduct.

Now, in a country tasting, though partially, the fruits of commerce; in a country enlightened by the luminous events of the American and French revolutions, is it astonishing that three-fourths of the people should feel disgraced by political exclusion, and dishonoured by non-representation? I put the question to unprejudiced man, and I think no man of mild and liberal principle but must reply—the effect is the legitimate offspring of the cause.

I know the body of the people, like the majority of all communities, is ignorant as to political arrangements, and thoughtless of consequences—and, it is a hard sentiment, but I fear it may truly be said, that man would be happy were he suffered to continue in ignorance—but bodies can be worked upon till they move, and the mass may move till it destroys. I would remove the cause that we might not bear the effect. The black
blood

blood of rebellion is still warm, and circulates in the hearts of the people. I would purify the fluid without wounding the body. I would indeed make them proud of being called the brethren of Britons, by pouring into their political existence the restorative energies of the British constitution. But can we safely admit the catholics into the legislative body?—As a *distinct* state we cannot—if we keep them without the pale they are still an inferior cast, and their degradation continues—continue their degradation and you continue the danger of the state—what then is the wise and safe means of doing away this dangerous degradation? what will secure the protestant and make the catholic free? UNION—By uniting the legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland, you secure the protestant ascendancy, because the united kingdoms will be aggregately protestant, and you safely open the door to catholic emancipation, because where there is no danger there will be no exclusion.

That the terms of Union would be liberal on the part of Great Britain there can be no rational doubt, because it is her *interest* to render Ireland content with the change and politically productive; now she can be rendered productive only by promoting her commercial ability, the promotion of her commercial ability would therefore, and by necessity become the peculiar care of the United Parliament.

But it may be asked, how can the Union of the Parliaments satisfy the Catholic, when
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even in that union his political ineapacities would continue? I answer, union would bring him nearer to the object of his wishes by lessening the danger of the collision; nay, it would by one happy stroke destroy the danger, and render him harmless, for what danger could there be in identifying all the people with the parliament, when the parliament by the very act of union would identify the protestant superiority?

Again; by uniting the parliaments the visible effects of superiority being removed would be softened; the irritation of the Catholic mind would have room for repose; repose would lead to retrospect; retrospect would shew the ruin consequent to French connexion; a more apparent equality of condition would prove a spur to industry—and thus by the silent but certain working of time, the Catholic would be admissible to the constitution of his country, not only by his weight in the body politic but by his civil merits. This, it may be said, is mere speculation; granted—but recollect it is speculation founded upon a distracted and fatally divided country; and surely it is reasonable to conclude that her condition must be meliorated and improved by tranquilizing her state, and by blending her with the civil manners and commercial habits of the most truly free and powerful nation in the world.

But how is this union to be accomplished?

How

How was the Scotch union accomplished? By the solemn assent of the parliaments of England and Scotland—And why cannot an union of Great Britain and Ireland be accomplished by the solemn assent of the King, Lords and Commons of these countries?—Is there any other legitimate power in the land to enact a law for the direction of the community? The constitution knows no legislative power but that of the parliament.

The British minister has placed the measure of uniting the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland before the parliament of his country with clearness, candour, and precision—On his general arguments I need not descant, but it is plain that he established, against the opposition of Mr. Sheridan (who at first denied the power of parliament and then seemed willing to forget his denial) the full and perfect competence of the parliaments to enact the measure of union; and this doctrine has received the deliberate and collective sense of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain.

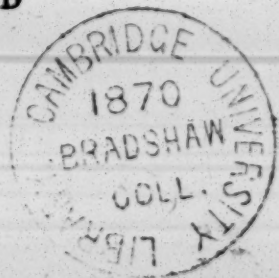
Here, then, we have, after time given for deliberation, and after elaborate discussion, the solemn and recorded opinion of the two houses of the British Parliament, that the legislative body is, and *is alone*, capable and competent to decide upon this great imperial measure.

The question has not yet been brought directly before the Irish parliament; but my Lord Cornwallis, his Majesty's representative in this Kingdom,

Kingdom, having, in his speech delivered to both Houses on the 22d of January 1799, expressed "His Majesty's anxious hope that the parliaments of both kingdoms would be disposed to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving a connexion essential to their common security, and of *consolidating*, as far as possible, into *one firm and lasting fabric*, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British Empire,"—and His Excellency's secretary, Lord Castlereagh, having avowed that "although there was in the address" (which embraced as usual all the points of the speech) no specific pledge to a measure of union, yet he did intend at an early day to submit to the House a specific motion on that subject,"—this avowal of the *future intention* on the part of government did in a manner bring the abstract question before the House, and Mr. George Ponsonby proposed an amendment to the address destructive of the minister's *intended* specific motion.

In the Lords, too, the address was combated on the same grounds, but the opposition was feeble, and the address was carried without a division.

The debate in the Commons was warm: the general good policy of the measure was not only doubted, but many members of weight did not hesitate to proclaim their absolute belief that the parliament had no right to enact union, because (they said) the enactment of union would
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invade



invade the constitution by altering or changing the established government of the land; they hinted at first principles, and deprecated the danger which would, they said, inevitably flow from a perseverance in the measure. On a division there appeared but a majority of *one* against the amendment; and thus the Commons—for government could not proceed on so great a question without a decided majority of the House—thus the Commons precluded its reception—created an alarm—and the measure is now suspended between the approbation of the Lords, and the disapprobation of, apparently, one half of the Commons.

Of the constitutional power of parliament to enact the measure the opposers of the Scotch union seem not to have entertained a shadow of doubt; they—and they were men of high name, high character, and high ability—they opposed it on the ground of general impolicy, and their indignation was roused by the belief that an union would entomb the ancient and proud independence of their country. The union, however, was enacted—the act may be truly said for ever to have destroyed the seeds of dissension between the two Kingdoms; and Scotland, from being turbulent, factious, and poor, is now calm, loyal, and rich—this is a great authority for the competence of parliament, because it is the authority of a *whole nation*, and that too an integral part of the kingdom

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dom of Great Britain, conceding to the determination of her *constitutional* governors.

In treating of the Scotch union, Blackstone, a sound and constitutional lawyer, does not entertain an idea of the incapacity of parliament to make the alteration—he states the power of parliament to be *unlimited*—that it can change and create afresh even the constitution of the Kingdom and of parliaments themselves—“ it can alter the succession to the Crown”—it threw aside the real heir and willed a Protestant branch to inherit—if the settlement at the revolution of 1688, is not constitutional, the present King is an usurper, because he derives under that settlement; but even the violent republicans allow him to be almost “ the *only lawful* King in Europe*” because of that very settlement, and, therefore, upon their own principles, the power and competence of parliament to alter the constitution is full and incontrovertible.

In truth, of the power of parliament to bind the people I believe no man who loves the constitution will seriously deny; the denial may serve for a season the purposes of party, but practice and precedent establish the point: were *first principles* to have been reverted to upon every *necessary* and *unavoidable* alteration which has taken place in the British constitution, that constitution would not now be the wonder of the world! “absolute

* Vide Dr. Price's famous sermon delivered on the
at the old Jewry.

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and despotic power must in all governments reside somewhere ; and in these kingdoms it is entrusted by the constitution to the parliament ;" glorious constitution ! that entrusts the despotic power of the state *only* in the *representatives of the people of the land* !

If a democrat starts up and tells me that parliament has only the right to enact laws for the *good* of the state, I agree, and answer that union is essential to the health, may to the very existence of the state ; if, as is probable, he denies my assertion, I bid him recal to his recollection the danger we have been in during these last two years of a total separation from Great Britain, by faction, treason, and rebellion, aided by a French army even on the soil ; I tell him that the mere *enacting* of a law does not make that law *good*—it is the working of that law on the body politic that stamps its value. Experience has shewn that what is called the *final settlement* of 1782, has not worked well either for the peace and security of the protestant, or for the political liberty of the catholic ; for there is neither peace nor security where there is an enemy at your threshold, and there is no liberty where there is any exclusion ; imperious *necessity*, therefore, calls, and calls loudly, for a *great final settlement* indeed, which can secure the protestant, make the catholic free, and bring peace to the land ;*—your distinct government has failed in

* And this final settlement would establish the position of Sir Hercules Langrishe—the Catholics would enjoy *every thing* under the state, but they would not *be the state*.

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these great and primary objects—nay, your settlement of 1782, was at best but a partial arrangement; it was a monopoly of rights on the one part, and a continuation of wrongs on the other—you acquired a constitution, and you excluded the people—you have felt the consequences, and if the monopoly is to be eternal, eternal will be the danger of the protestant establishment; but a wiser policy prevails; Great Britain offers for our acceptance “a complete and entire union founded on equal and liberal principles.” Union with Britain will assimilate our strength with the strength of that mighty nation; that union of strength can alone secure the protestant government in church and state, and that security of church and state will infallibly accelerate and establish the entire emancipation of the Roman Catholic.*—Without a legislative union with Great Britain the protestant of Ireland can have no security, nor can the catholic of Ireland have a hope

* “The exchange,” says the very sensible Mr. Wm. Smith, “which by communicating to Ireland a full participation in the benefits of the British constitution, must, (such is the spirit of that constitution) at the same time produce happiness and freedom to her people.” Mr. Smith I presume means *all* the people of Ireland; here I am with him—but I do not think that the moment of Union would be the moment of emancipation to the Catholics.—My ideas on this point are more moderate, and perhaps more sure—I think would infallibly *lead* to emancipation; but that some time must elapse, a consequence of recent events, before the arrival of that unavoidable act of wisdom and justice.

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of obtaining political liberty. The protestant and catholic are two corrosive poisons in the body politic, both acting against that body by each exhausting the other; union will render those poisons not only harmless, but by a complete admixture correct the humours, purify the blood, and renovate and restore the health of the whole.

Still my opponent may exclaim, what! can the parliament at its will *alter* the constitution? I answer, yes, it has the constitutional power, and the exercise of that power is left to its wisdom—where the state is in danger the constitution has been altered, and may be altered again—“Formerly,” says Blackstone, “the descent was absolute, and the crown must go to the next heir, without any restriction; but now upon the *new settlement* the inheritance is conditional.”—Who made this alteration? was it the people? no—it was the parliament, and it is either *pure* constitution, or every act succeeding is *corrupt* and *illegal*.

The power of parliament, says Sir Edward Coke (that oracle of the English law)—“is *absolute*, it cannot be confined within *any* bounds,”—and why? because it is the only *legal lawgiver*:—“it *has*,” says Blackstone—“*uncontroulable* authority;” and why?—for the *tranquillity* of the community. The acquiescence of the people has stamped the omnipotence of Parliament; have they ever warred against the exercise of that power? History gives a melancholy instance where a king, indeed, warred against the authority of parliament—but
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the people supported that authority, and the catastrophe need not here be related.

Let us now look towards the policy of the measure.

Great Britain, the first commercial country in the world, double our population, and the force of that population doubled by her industry, offers to unite her political existence with Ireland, a country of small commerce, little capital, and less industry. I speak generally; and when I say small commerce, I do not forget the linen trade of the North; and I recollect with esteem the persevering spirit and great talents of its parent and promoter John Foster:—Yet when it is considered that were Great Britain to withdraw her preference of that manufacture, which in fact acts as a bounty of thirty per cent. in its favour, exclusive of its free admission to the British market, and the bounties granted by Britain on its re-export; I say, when it is considered that were Great Britain, from whatever motive, to withdraw these decided advantages, the linen trade of this kingdom would linger, and might be brought to perish by the legislature of that country politically encouraging the import of foreign linens, and nursing in her own bosom a similar manufacture.

The poverty of our capital springs from the feeble state of our commerce; for with regard to trade, really as such, except in the article of linen, and that confined to a fourth portion of the kingdom,

dom, we have little or none—we are, in truth, a nation of consumers, and by consequence the capital which might be employed in commerce, and which would in that case increase with the increasing industry of the people, is unavoidably devoted to the luxuries of the rich, and to the necessities of the poor.—Those who know Ireland know this to be a melancholy truth, that her people are not *generally* employed in trade or manufactures, and the consequence is conspicuous in their nakedness, in their indolence, and in their habits of inebriation:—now the proposed measure of Union would at once, and effectually, strike at the very root of these evils; it would for the particular benefit of Ireland, and for the general benefit of the empire, secure every political preference (that preference is now precarious) to the linen trade of the North; by establishing harmony it would awaken the dormant faculties of the people; the natural advantages of the land for tillage, manufacture, and commerce, would be searched, discovered, and improved; the fruits of industry are sweet, and once tasted do not diminish, but increase the appetite for full possession; and *equal rights*, that strong national ligament that ties a community together; and *self-interest*, that particular and general principle of all human bodies, would be, and would be without impediment, the grand promoters of universal exertion.

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The measure thus seems to promise lasting advantage to Ireland ; and it may be asked, what is the cause of this liberality on the part of Great Britain? Assuredly she can have no commercial advantages in view, for she may be truly said at this moment to possess the commerce of the world ; no,—her leading wish is to *secure the physical power of the Irish people* ; to attain this great, and, for her safety, this necessary end, she opens to Ireland all the incalculable benefits of her establishment. Irrevocably united in interest she sees, and she sees with pain, that separate independence endangers the connexion ; she beholds France, that modern monster of civil government, invited by faction and encouraged by rebellion, not only willing to seize, but actually dispatching fleets and armies to subdue the country ; she finds that portion of its inhabitants who are well affected to the British government, a proportion most respectable in number and decided in property, is yet too feeble to withstand the torrent of a foreign force, swelled with the more deadly waters of domestic treason ; to defend that portion from the baneful fang of French fraternity, to secure the country from a perpetuity of warfare, political and religious, she opens to it the door that leads directly to peace, safety, industry, and prosperity ; she offers entirely to blend her being with the being of the Irish nation, and by Union to become *one and indivisible* in all political and physical capacities.

Here I may be desired to pause, and call to my recollection the religion of the people ; I may be told the Catholics in Great Britain are excluded by law from all political power ; that their admission could not endanger the state, because *there* their body is proportionally small ; and I may be asked, why then does not Great Britain shew the liberality of her spirit, and allow her Catholic children the full rights of the constitution ? if she refuses it to them, upon what grounds can the *Irish* Catholic expect a benefit which to the *English* Catholic is denied ? to this question I answer (and in answering I do not justify the conduct, I only state the policy) that the English Catholics may *safely* be refused the privilege, because *the body is small*, but the *Irish* Catholics, being the *great body of the people*, may reasonably expect to obtain by Union every political right, because it would be *dangerous* to withhold those rights from the preponderating power of the nation.

Mr. Pitt, in his admirable speech on this meditated measure, uttered the following remarkable words—talking of Protestant Ascendancy and Catholic Grievances :—“ Between the two,” said he—“ it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of some persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or grant the claims of the latter ;”—“ but,” says he, a little afterwards, “ no man can say that while Ireland remains a *separate* kingdom full concessions could be made to the Catholics without endangering

gering the state."—It is clear his argument goes to remove the danger, and that therefore it is in the mind of the British government, if the measure of Union should be adopted, by one great act of justice and sound policy, not only to unite the kingdoms, but to unite the people.

Without this, Union would be but a half measure, keeping up the ball of grievances, rancour, and animosity.—Would you have the people content—and without a contented people, can you build upon their obedience to the Laws, or their loyalty to the Sovereign? What! can they be content under laws which keep them in *esclavage*? The King personally they may love for his private virtues, but being the head of a crushing system, their allegiance is air. Would you have the people content? give them *equal rights*—proscription is the fermenting hot-bed of civil distraction—it is a hag more disgusting and detestable than Milton's Sin—the Genius of Britain would weep over a nation of slaves—and while the Catholic of Ireland is marked by any political exclusion, that exclusion will in his mind constitute his slavery.

Goddeſs of rational liberty! benignant, placid, ſteady; not the mountain nymph that ſweeps along like a torrent, and tears with licentious violence even nature up by the roots——no—Goddeſs of civilized ſociety! defender of rights! promoter of concord! calmly thou moveſt along, and in thy train is found peace, induſtry, property, ſecurity:

security :—O touch with thy omnipotent wand the leaders of this nation! open their eyes to the horrible progeny of proscription, and pour upon their minds the fulness of thy wisdom! place before their political vision the blessings of political Union—reciprocal rights, reciprocal benefits---one people---one strength---supported by, and supporting, that constitution whose virtues could hand them down to an almost immortality of duration!

There can be no “complete and entire Union” between Great Britain and Ireland unless they possess equal and reciprocal rights; and there can be no reciprocal rights where the great body of the Irish people are denied their full participation---If you exclude the majority of the people, your Union will be but an act of more determined oppression; and surely such an act could neither confirm nor continue the security of the Protestant or the safety of the state---no---this cannot be the policy of Great Britain---she may be liberal where she has nothing to fear, and where her liberality must insure her domestic peace, and nourish her political being.

Union would destroy domestic faction;---would be a death-blow to the hopes, and the machinations of a foreign enemy; would rapidly lead to the overthrow of that baneful and dangerous preference which the policy of the state is, in the the present order of things, compelled to shew the

the Protestant; it would ultimately open the rights of the constitution to every man of the country; it would act as a caustic against the proud flesh of religion, and reduce it from being a sore to be a smooth and a healthy part of the body politic; it would prove the nurse of a generous loyalty, and the parent of a general industry; in securing public peace it would be the firmest security for private property; and if it is true that British exertion has overgrown its soil, it is surely but reasonable to expect that upon the establishment of tranquillity it will shoot across the channel, and take root in Ireland, for the safety of private property would encourage the migration of speculative men, whose talents for trade or manufacture, in finding so noble a field for exertion, could not fail of a rich reward while they enriched the country. These are the blessings which would inevitably flow from a *liberal* union, and which without a *liberal* Union this fertile, populous, and loyal land can never hope to experience.

The question is not Union or immediate separation, but Union or political uncertainty. The Protestant power in Ireland, and the assisting strength of Great Britain, are fully adequate to keep off separation---but they must fight it on the threshold; civil discontent will feed the fire of faction, encourage foreign invasion, and the only thing certain in the land will be a ruinous continuance of its domestic horrors.

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In the present order of things the chances of separation are many ; it is evident that Union would reduce those chances, and by consequence the danger of separation would be less.

Allowing the *general* good policy of the measure, let us now look a little at particulars ; with, however, this observation, that where a measure affecting a whole community is found in all the probabilities of human reason, to be generally good, the interests of some distinct branches of that community are not to be held up as a stop or impediment to the accomplishment of that measure. If a man has a mortification in his limb, he calls in the opinion of the faculty, and willingly and wisely sacrifices the limb for the salvation of the body.

By a Legislative Union it is said Dublin would be ruined ; and why ? from the removal of Parliament, and the extinction of the Court. That the Parliament would be removed is certain, and that the removal would in a degree affect the splendor of the city is allowed. With respect to the Court, or what is commonly called the Castle, its splendor we have not for some latter years been much accustomed to ;—the lowering darkness of the times threw it into shade, and if the citizens are to feel a loss in this instance, at least it will come recommended by custom. The extinction of the Court, however, is by no means to be expected, supposing the Union to obtain ; the presence of the Viceroy will, from our geographical

graphical situation, be found essentially necessary by the Imperial Government; the splendor of his establishment must equal the dignity of his station; and, presiding over an united people, he will surely enjoy the happy and peaceful opportunity of reflecting upon the capital, the uninterrupted and undiminished rays of royal magnificence.

The removal of the Parliament, alone, is then to ruin Dublin:—has the removal of the Scotch Parliament been the ruin of Edinburgh? She can point to her new city and smile at our apprehension. Dublin must continue the seat of judicial proceeding; she will still enjoy her advantages as the center of internal commerce; her University will still possess its Charter and literate superiority—she must continue the head quarters of the army—will these certain and perpetual advantages contribute to the ruin of Dublin? Or will the inhabitants on the accomplishment of Union fly their city in the wild hope of finding a better in the desert? The little external commerce she has she will assuredly be able to maintain, and the imports she exhausts she will continue to exhaust still, because where there are numbers there must be consumption, and where there is consumption there must, according to the present state of social luxury, be importation. And is it too much to expect that the benefits of reciprocity, and the example of British industry, will in a very few years indeed make ample returns

turns into the public stock for any partial difference that Dublin may experience by the occasional absence of one hundred Commoners and fifty Peers of the realm?—You may double the number, and the effect would not be so dreadful as clamour is willing to insinuate; apprehension sees the thing it fears through a fog, and it is not difficult to impress the ignorant mind with the phantoms of imagination. Would the peers and commoners pass all their time in Great Britain? Would they abandon their best interest, the interest of their property; and of their posterity, for the mighty pleasure of breathing in Britain? surely these questions need no reply, they bear on their front their own refutation.

I insist not upon the conditional benefits which Dublin may reap from the collateral branches of the union; but this is indubitable, if Dublin shall be particularly considered it will be to her advantage: it is probable the removal of parliament will give a check to her architectural improvement, but that check will not lessen her dignity as the capital of the kingdom—the head of the community—the heart which circulates all the vivifying acts of the state to the extremities of the commonwealth.

What, then, has Dublin to apprehend? she seems frightened by her own fear; or is she actuated by a selfish policy, and would willingly continue the degradation of her fellow subjects, and the danger of the realm, so she might enjoy in
corporate

corporate exclusion her own petty advantages and paltry pomp?

When the question of union was first promulgated, it certainly did create a sort of general alarm; the populace declaimed against it without knowing why, and the little orators of the day thundered their philippics without knowing wherefore; the bar, and every man must defer much to that reputable body; the bar was eager to meet and enlighten the people with its opinion on the case, and it was a liberal opinion in one sense, for it was given without the influence of the accustomary fee; but disputation is l'esprit du corps, and, notwithstanding they had so good a cause to be unanimous, there was opposition, debate, and protest against the vote of the day—nay, it was remarked that some of the most brilliant ornaments of the bar for legal knowledge and for commanding eloquence, kept aloof from the scene, and that many of that description, who were present, kept a profound and sagacious silence on the subject. The mountain laboured, and a mouse was born! Behold the opinion of the meeting on the case of a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.

“Resolved, that the measure of a legislative union of this kingdom and Great Britain is an *innovation*, which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propose, *at the present juncture*, to this country.”

This resolution does not say that the measure would be ruinous to the commerce and independence of the country—no—it really says, *this* is a *dangerous period* to agitate the question, but in future it might prove a *beneficial innovation*. The gentlemen of the law do not oppose the constitutional legality of the measure, they only hesitate as to *the time* of promulgation—it is very possible for a man to be a good lawyer and a very bad politician; something like this appears in the resolution under consideration, for to common sense it would appear, that when our irrevocable connexion with Great Britain is openly and powerfully attacked by foreign force and domestic treason, that is the point of time, because it imperiously proclaims the necessity, by union, to defeat the one and to crush for ever the hopes of the other.

I had almost forgot the attorneys, those never failing friends to the good of the community! they too met, and for the public benefit, as usual, took an active part in the general confusion.

But the high-flyers of ascendancy, the corporations, and other corporations, taking their tone from the metropolis, have with peculiar pertinacity set their faces against any future concession to their catholic brethren—brethren?—they will not admit of any relationship, and affect to look with horror on a measure which has in its foundation the necessary means of ultimately restoring to that preponderating body, the rights of their country. What! no pity? no, once and for ever! This
conduct

conduct of the corporations recalls to memory a picture very finely touched by the pencil of Shakespear, of a *herd of deer, full of the pasture*, disdaining to commiserate the sufferings of an unfortunate and languishing brother, *who from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt*. "Sweep on, ye *fat and greasy citizens*, you will not stay to greet that poor and *broken bankrupt* there."

What can be found in the opposition of the corporations but an intolerant and unenlightened spirit? intolerant, because it proceeds directly from an apprehension of catholic freedom; and unenlightened, because it is wrapt up in self, and blind to the general interest not only of the empire but of their country*.

* Perhaps they think their own immediate interest will be affected; it is time it should, the monopoly is disgraceful to the spirit of the British constitution. There is one reflection, however, that may yield them much consolation: Years must roll away before the effects of corporate participation can be felt: for them the tables will long groan under the bounty of Providence, and the good things of this life! When the stomach is full, and wine has had its effect, the honest citizen is no martyr to politics or religion! But the lucid

* It is melancholy to reflect that this excluding policy, dangerous as unjust, did, at one time, work itself into the minds even of the grand juries of the kingdom; witness their resolutions *never* to admit the catholic to a participation of the elective franchise in *any time to come*—monstrous and absurd!—did these gentlemen believe they were to *live for ever*?

moment

moment will arrive, when even the corporations shall acknowledge the necessity of union, and solicit the boon which they now idly reject! They know the benefits of security, and they cannot long remain blind to the necessity of erecting the fortress of Protestant Ascendancy on a firm, broad, and imperial foundation. "Our constitution," says Mr. Burke, "is not made for great, general, and proscriptive exclusions; sooner or later it will destroy them, or they will destroy the constitution."

Should union be enacted, the coronation oath may continue without the alteration of a single letter; for the king may safely and solemnly engage to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the protestant reformed religion as by law established; as the religion of the empire will be protestant not only in the letter of the law, but in the practice of the people: and thus the established church will be "fundamental and essential for ever in the united kingdoms."

But it has been said, "Don't unite, for what security have you that the terms of union will be kept inviolate? the same power that makes can destroy;" granted; but we have the security of interest; interest, that great and universal cement, national as well as individual, must from the very nature and end of civil society be the directing power, and conserving principle of this consummation so devoutly to be wished. Can the land be annihilated? no; can the people be exterminated?

nated? no; does Great Britain expect to draw any benefits from this country? certainly; will she, then, to obtain those benefits, and to increase her own strength by securing their continuance, adopt a ruinous policy, leave the land a waste, and crush the spirit of industry and commerce among its inhabitants? absurd supposition; it is morally certain, that, union rivetting the connexion, it must be the interest and selfish duty of Great Britain to nurse the population and riches of Ireland, in order that she may participate in the physical power of that population, and in the political energy of those riches—What! would the wisdom of Britain leave the land a lump of morbid matter, pregnant with disease, and hastening to dissolution? If that were her policy, why propose union? why wish to unite distemper, that might infect herself? no, separation, our existing separation, theoretically independent, but undermining the constitution to support the government, would more rapidly accomplish the destruction of our political fabric. As far as any human foundation can be safely built upon, this is an immoveable basis; her prosperous existence is allied to the prosperous existence of this country; Britain is powerful, and could stand, but not firmly, without Ireland, but Ireland must fall without the support of Great Britain.

This great truth has been long seen and felt by the wisest heads and purest hearts in both kingdoms, and therefore it has become a state axiom,
that

that Great Britain and Ireland must stand and fall together---for fall they will!* every thing in nature perishes, and every human contrivance must have an end! the liberties of Greece are extinct, and Rome is no more! the first fell from an excess of freedom, and the latter from an excess of conquest; the land is there, but the spirit has fled. She rested in Britain, and spreads her fostering wings over that mighty and commercial empire; blend with her strength, reciprocate in her benefits; by union you pour new life into her body, and insure your own existence; the branch will die if separated from the trunk.

It were here unpardonable not to pay some attention to Mr. Foster; he is a gentleman of great talents, and it must be supposed he means well to his country; he has been an indefatigable friend to her staple commodity, and his statement of its progressional increased consumption must con-

* Montesquieu says, that the liberties of Britain will perish when the legislative becomes as corrupt as the executive power.—There seems, however, in the constitution of Britain a preserving principle beyond the legislative power—the people.—If the people are virtuous the corruption of the legislative body cannot destroy their liberty—it would certainly forge the chains, but they must themselves be mean enough to rivet them on: the constitutional period arrives for new delegation, and the arrival of that period puts the full power of purifying the Legislative body in the hands of the people—if they wisely exercise that power their liberties will stand; if they neglect that duty, their liberties will perish; it is the people, therefore, and not the legislature, that must destroy the temple and the God.

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vince the most sceptical of our ability to improve where we have opportunity, and also of the essentiality of Great Britain to invigorate that ability and preserve that improvement.

To Mr. Foster's commercial detail I shall, therefore, allow its full weight; but I shall take leave to look at it from a new point of view; and I ask, supposing we had been really an independent nation, unconnected with Great Britain, but possessing her political constitution since 1782, whether it is in the nature of things, with her for a rival, we should now have had any commercial benefits to calculate?---let good sense reflect, and candour reply.

I shall, with very high respect towards Mr. Foster, put it in another way. We are a distinct and independent nation; you, Sir, calculate the benefits which have grown under the nursing wing of British connexion since 1782. Now, Sir, I beg to be informed, whether with the constitution of Britain, but without the encouragement of her laws or the protection of her power, we could have established our commerce or maintained our independence?

Again; suppose, and it is a fair case, for physical power is necessary to produce, improve, and support commercial existence---suppose we had established our political independency in 1782, against the will of Great Britain, and, abandoning our connexion with that kingdom, had essayed to become her rival in commerce; could we from that
period

period to the present time so have opposed her power, not only in war (for war she must have poured upon us but in trade, as to have enabled us to maintain our independency, and to compete with her in the markets of the world?

For my part, Sir, I think the true answer to these questions makes the force of your argument very feeble indeed; for we have no independence if we cannot maintain our independency; and the commerce we call ours is in reality not ours, if its course can be stopped by the precarious will of any human external power. I think that with Great Britain for an enemy we could have neither liberty nor commerce, and that the connexion maintains and supports all we have of the one and of the other. I, therefore, Sir, see nothing in your calculations but proofs of the advantages we have reaped from that connexion; and I conclude that rivetting the connexion by indissoluble union will insure to us a continuation of those advantages by enlarging our power of action, and by giving us our true and natural importance in the empire.

Little weaknesses in wise men are recorded, because wisdom is the opposite of folly. Newton would sometimes forget the magnitude of his mind, and shew in triumph the finewy strength of his arm!--Mr. Foster, in the greatness of his subject forgets his political sagacity, and by the following extraordinary apostrophe rouses the Catholic from lethargy and stupor.—“Your country is in danger. A desperate attempt is on foot to seduce
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duce you to surrender the independence of *your parliament*.—You are natives of the island, interested in its trade, its prosperity, its freedom; and in *all* the blessings of a glorious and *happy constitution*—forget all family differences—all local or partial jealousies, and save your country.” He here calls upon the catholic as if he were really a free man—he is not free—what has he been struggling for? constitutional liberty; has he got it?—No.—Why then should he be told that his country is in danger? the slave has no country? that a desperate attempt is on foot to seduce him to surrender the independence of *his parliament*?—Has he a single representative there? No, not one! Is he interested by *exclusion* in *all* the blessings of our happy constitution?—Can he forget all differences, all local or partial jealousies? alas! it is not to be expected!—It is, indeed, a tenet of the christian code to *do good for evil*, and the instruction breathes the divine spirit of its author; but being men we must act according to the dust of our nature! Mr. Foster desires two-thirds of the people of this land, the catholics, to defend the independence of that parliament from which they are, and must continue to be, politically expelled!—You keep the catholic from a full participation of the constitution; and you call upon him to perpetuate that constitution of which he is never to participate! If this is not grossly inconsistent, there is no meaning in words. “Tell the bold minister,” says Mr. Foster, “who wants

to take away *your constitution*, that you will not be *his dupes*."—"Alas"! may not the catholic retort? ---"alas! Mr. Foster, you know *we* have *no* constitution, and we will not be *your dupes*."

The truth is this---the catholic body, sore with disappointment, and disappointment, too, unwisely, because unsteadily held out to them by the government of the country, finding themselves threatened with an eternity of exclusion, would see with indifference the annihilation of the constitution; with this dangerous indifference pervading the body of your people, union must prove political salvation; you cannot be secure while the catholic is disfranchised, and he cannot be franchised with safety to the state, while the government is distinct. Great Britain sees the malady, and she now knows there is only one way to accomplish a cure. Under her binding acts the protestants were uneasy, because she was the instrument; under the protestant direction the catholics revolt, because there is an expelling principle. Among the multitude of its other advantages, union would give the catholic a country to enrich with his labour or defend with his strength: if the political sun does not shine upon him, he cares not how barren the produce; if he is denied the first of civil rights, his soul, the faculties of his mind, will not inspire and energize his physical powers in the defence of the soil. Great Britain will not speculate in theory, when she can realize in practice—

tice—to conciliate is to secure.—Union is the great general act of conciliation—it will place the protestant beyond the fear of the catholic; and it will restore the catholic to his civil rights, without endangering the protestant power.

What is union? to make two or more distinct bodies one.—If Great Britain unites only with *protestant* Ireland, that will be no union—it is idle to talk of uniting governments, without uniting the people of those governments; Great Britain is an unit,—we are a nation consisting of two distinct bodies—before you can feel the real benefits of imperial union, those two distinct domestic bodies must be harmonized, must be made one.—This is a great political truth, and Mr. Pitt is so impressed by its potency, that he has not scrupled to hesitate a doubt, in his general reasoning, as to the system of church establishment which, in Ireland, would be most free from difficulty and inconvenience, and thus he impliedly confesses, that the protestant establishment in Ireland forms difficulty and inconvenience to imperial policy: but union, pure, broad, and general union, removes from this important part of the subject the necessity of any state quackery, and presents with a liberal hand and smiling face the panacea of our political existence.—This is the cup of renovation, and if the want of it has made “all men sick and some men mad,” its possession will make all men well and some men wise.—Will party, in the frantic spirit of disappointment, essay to dash
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the healing draught from the parched lip of the people? Patriotism is not a compound of fire and folly, it is a pure substance, and cool, and moves steadily to its object, the *GENERAL weal*, with right on one side and reason on the other—Ye demagogues of the day! prove the political independence you call upon us so loudly to defend; shew us your stream of commerce unmixed with the swelling waters of a wider source; shew us your power to maintain the one and to increase the other; and when you have done this, and this you cannot do, the harrassed people of the land may listen and believe that party is virtue, and declamation wisdom!

There seems one grand error to run through the whole of Mr. Foster's argument; he contends for the protestant part of the state only, without taking into consideration the catholics of the country, except in the instance of his curious apostrophe; now the measure of union would not be so necessary, did the protestants alone constitute the people, but the great point to accomplish by union, is the harmony of the general community, without which there can be no state safety. A people may be whipped into silence, but they cannot be whipped into content. Coercion is a bad system of government; it may debase, but it can never exalt a people; nor is it a system that can last; while it is in force it is execrable, and when its fury has wasted its strength, an inevitable consequence, it is destroyed, and the community is
thrown

thrown by the vice of its governors into the horrors of anarchy. And here I cannot help remarking that the people of Ireland have *felt the whip*, and that Mr. Foster is injudicious to his cause, and unfriendly to his country, in lamenting, as he does *, the discontinuance of that disgraceful and horrid system of military coercion, a system totally repugnant to the laws of the land, and consequently subversive of all civil liberty—The British Government saw this, and found it necessary to step forward and save the people, not by “following up the vigour” of whipping, and burning, and picketing, but by the mild and persuasive energy of constitutional law tempered with constitutional mercy!

And here it may be allowed a man who writes for neither party, but whose little exertion is the result of a perfect conviction of the general virtue of the great measure proposed—it may, I hope, be allowed such a man to hail Lord Cornwallis as the instrument of human salvation and human happiness. There is a sort of fatality (I do not mean to chain the idea to the *letter*) runs through the existence of every individual; in domestic concerns we see it often attach—in the more conspicuous walks of public life it immediately and strongly impresses the mind of the observer. Ancient history could furnish a volume of examples, but I shall content myself with giv-

* Vide Mr. Foster's Speech, page 113.

ing two instances from modern record which go to establish a sort of leading fatality of consequences, particularly observable in the character of every public man.

Admiral Byron had great talents, professional knowledge, opportunity, and singular perseverance; yet, it may be said, from the first hour of his public life to the last, he was uniformly unfortunate.

Admiral Rodney, than whom a better seaman, or more perfect gentleman, never commanded a British fleet, was greatly successful in almost all his *public* undertakings: as a *private* man he was as remarkably unfortunate! and his country (I almost weep in recording the fact!) left him to die literally of a broken heart! I am well aware he had a pension and a ribband, but he should not have been left to the destructive fangs of the law. His capture of St. Eustatius was accomplished under the express order of government, and government, in common justice and in public gratitude, should have defended that act as their own, against a combination of British subjects become Dutch traders, and who, under the veil of that character, supplied the enemies of England with naval stores, provisions, and almost every article necessary to carry on and protract the war: he found them in the island Dutch burghers, and as Dutch burghers he confiscated their property. He was left to their vengeance, and he perished in the contest—Yes, and his body, his lifeless body, which

which should have been consecrated by his country, was seized in the streets of the capital by the emissaries of the law, and for some time the rites of sepulture were savagely denied to the vindicator of his country's naval superiority—to the conqueror of Langara and de Grasse!

The destiny of Lord Cornwallis is not fulfilled, but thus far it has been pregnant with good to his fellow creatures. His convention at York town was an act of wisdom and reflective humanity; he might have opposed Washington and Rochambeau with slaughterous effect, but with no reasonable hope of victory or retreat; his surrender was an act of more determined bravery—he risked his fame, and saved the lives of at least 2000 men! He next appears in India, driving the restless Tippoo before him even to the gates of Seringapatam—he could have mastered the capital, but his happier destiny prevailed, and the horrid practice of man murdering man was suspended; he made an advantageous peace, leaving Tippoo his capital and a kingdom, and converting him, as it were, into a political check over the intrigues of the neighbouring princes. After having humanely, and to the utmost point of patriotic good, fulfilled his mission, he returned from India as from a place of banishment; he resigned all the power and all the riches of the East, for enjoyments more congenial to his nature—for the calm of honourable repose, and for the nameless blessings of domestic privacy! but his destiny again interposed,
and

and he was chosen by his sovereign to be the *instrument of Peace to the People!* His appearance in Ireland was the harbinger of returning reason—the pike dropped from the hand of the deluded peasant, and loyalty became the order of the day! the whip was banished, humanity prevailed, the atrociously guilty were punished, and titled iniquity did not escape the incurable wound of public censure; the Orange and the Green, equally factious, and equally obnoxious to the good of the land, were discountenanced, and acted no longer as colours of disaffection to the peace of the community—An honest soldier, an honest man, intrusted with the anxious wish of the king—he will honourably endeavour to fulfil it; and if he does accomplish union, his destiny will arrive at the climax of its beneficence; he will extend the blessings of Constitutional Liberty to a whole People, and secure the integrity of the British Empire.

The body politic is subject to diseases; its constitution being the creature of man is therefore blended with the infirmities of his nature; when those diseases appear it becomes the duty of the governing power to search the cause and apply the remedy. The governing power of a community may be aptly termed *the mind*, and the members of a community may be properly called *the body*. If the mind is corrupted, it neglects the constitution, and the body falls into cureless ruin; but, if the mind is sound and the constitution is attacked

attacked by bodily swellings, inflammations, and other tokens of disease, the mind must then, having the power, administer the power, administer the remedy, and in the progress of the cure, the constitution, in order to save the whole, may be necessarily altered: the immediate effect of this alteration is the restoration of bodily health—the constitution itself may be strengthened by the unavoidable change, but this must be left to time to discover; at all events it has more than an equal chance of improvement, and it is better, even supposing the constitution to suffer, to save the life, than by neglect to destroy the body.

Now this apparent theory has been practically proved, for it contains in its principle, though not in its parts, the cause and consequence of the glorious revolution of 1688; and will any man, with this great precedent staring him in the face, have the folly to deny the competency of Parliament to alter the constitution? Is it not recorded in the temple of immortal fame, that the alteration of the constitution in 1688 purified its being, gave continuation to its existence, and established a perfection of legal liberty for which there is no parallel in the pages of ancient or of modern history?

It is curious, and conveys no bad lesson, to regard the contradictory declamations of *party*; the following instance will, perhaps, leave its proper impression upon the public mind.

Our ci-divant patriots exerted all their eloquence to prove the necessity of a reform in parliament.

To reform the parliament, no man will deny, is to alter the parliament, and it is an incontrovertible truth, that to alter the parliament would be to alter the constitution; now, these very men, who so flurdily urged parliament to alter the constitution by lopping, trimming, and reforming one of its essential branches, have the modesty to tell parliament, with very edifying consistency! that it has no power whatever, to make any alteration in the constitution!—Really those gentlemen must conclude the people have neither ears or memory. It is also to be observed, that the alteration *they* meditated would have been pregnant with danger to the state, because, and it was a progression they avowed, the reform of parliament would necessarily have accomplished catholic emancipation—would that have been no alteration of the present constitution!—it would have been an alteration big with mischief, for, as a distinct government, catholic emancipation and protestant controul are incompatible, the power of the first fully admitted to the rights of the constitution, could not rest *under the state*, nor be content as *part of the state*—it would be *the state*—then farewell to British connexion and protestant ascendancy!

Union—a real, effective, complete, and liberal union, is the only political alteration that can harmonize the jarring and discordant parts of this kingdom, and bring every good subject and honest man,

man, let his Religion be what it may, to the rightful enjoyment of the Constitution of his Country.

Is religion a politic law? Or is it an emanation from the universal Creator? if it is a politic law, let it work for the good of the whole — if it is an inspiration from that benignant Being whose attribute is mercy; obtrude not your petty policy upon the eternal will, nor rebel against his Justice by debasing his creature!

The Legislature of Great Britain has recorded its solemn opinion that Union would promote peace; would destroy faction; would annihilate the destructive influence of party; would for ever defeat the hopes of France to separate and subdue; would give and secure one power, one strength, one energy to the empire, free from jealousy, and acting without restraint; that it would identify to each country the commercial benefits of both, blending England in Ireland, and Ireland in England; that it would eventually do away the imperious necessity of political distinction, and open the door of the temple to the people of the land: on this broad, deep and firm foundation has the legislature of Britain erected a noble and eternal monument of its liberal and enlightened policy; and the common Sovereign of both countries will recommend the measure to the deliberate wisdom of his Irish Parliament.

The

The alarm has been rung, and national prejudice has been roused by stentorian lungs, and not with the most winning urbanity of manners, to oppose any union as futile in principle, and as a nullity in act, founded on the watch-word incompetence: but the little cabals of party for power must vanish before the magnitude of national good and Imperial security.

Parliament has been, by an Irish Senator, eloquently, but not accurately termed the "immortal soul of the constitution; its immortality, we all know, experiences periodical dissolution, if not brought to an untimely death by the will of the King: and this soul has been sadly abused as a vicious and most corrupt body! The Orator proceeds, and tells us that the parliament has no power to lay its hand on the constitution, but he has discovered that Parliament and People, by *mutual consent*, may change the form of the Constitution." The Constitution itself is against the admission of this new doctrine. The power of change must either be either in the Parliament or in the People, for it cannot at one and the same time be in both; if Parliament exists it is constitutionally the directing power of the community, and the people having delegated to it their whole authority, are bound to obey its will; during the existence of parliament the people do not, nor can they, constitutionally speaking, compose another legislative body; and during dissolution

lution the parliament is politically annihilated—it is, therefore, clear that as they cannot, in a legislative capacity, constitutionally exist together, they cannot co-operate, constitutionally, in any act of legislation.

A Member of Parliament not only represents his particular constituents, but virtually the general community: he is to watch over, defend, and promote the advantage and happiness of the whole—it is, therefore, possible, if his constituents think proper to instruct him how to vote for *their* particular interest, *that* instruction may upon deliberation be found inimical to the *general good*, and the representative, in that case, honestly and faithfully discharges his duty by *disobeying his constituents*. If, indeed, the whole constituent body, or a decisive majority of them, send to their representatives similar instructions, the decision on the question will then wisely correspond with the general wish:—but the practice of instructing representatives is of very late date, and innovates on the principle of the Constitution; for constitutionally there is but one deliberative body for the Commons, and if they, the Commons, delegate that body, and, during the existence of that delegation, deliberate and decide, they in effect take the duty of their representatives into their own hands, and nullify an essential branch of the Constitution.

If

If Parliament can alter itself it can alter the Constitution, for the alteration of Parliament is the alteration of the Constitution—now, Parliament can alter itself because it has altered itself, and therefore it can alter the Constitution.

But the most plausible argument against the competency of the Irish Parliament to enact an Union might be drawn from its not being, in fact, the representatives of the people which that Union is to bind—it represents the Protestant body of the community, but the Catholic body it does not represent, and therefore it has no constitutional power to dispose of that body by Union—if we admit this reasoning, it makes against the right of parliament, in toto, to enact for the Catholic body—we easily perceive to what civil destruction this doctrine would lead, and we also perceive the political necessity of Union to render that civil destruction impossible.

It is a question of mighty moment to both countries—shall we for the necessary end of rendering the connexion indissoluble, by Union, which makes one being of two states, blend our political existence with the political existence of Great Britain; or continue our distinct principle of government, leading incontrovertibly to separation of connexion?

“*Salus populi suprema lex.*”——

Let the question be weighed by that even beam of justice and true policy—put in one scale the

good

good of the community, in the other *corporation prejudice*, and *party passion*, and see which will preponderate. But we must have a steady and impartial hand to hold the balance.

Is it for the benefit of the people of Ireland to be secured in their property, and in all the blessings of the British Constitution? The Anglo-Irish will not hesitate to answer in the affirmative; and as for the Catholic, the native of the soil, his eager and rational expectations have been long pointed to that essential consummation.—

Where then is the impediment? Independency.—

What! is independency an impediment to political right, civil security, and national happiness? So it would seem—but let us dispassionately look at this independency, perhaps it is only a *name*, and, if so, it cannot, among a reasonable people, prevent the establishment of national good.

It has already been shewn that political independence is not possessed by this country, and that, in the present state of Europe, and in her devoted connexion with Great Britain, a perfect independency cannot be a possession of Ireland. The united Directory of Ireland did indeed think otherwise, and treated with the French to assist them in their patriotic endeavour to destroy their country, in order to establish her independency!—they were shallow politicians—and, bit by the Mania of Revolution they overlooked the deadly consequences of its accomplishment—the horrors
attendant

attendant on civil war, never came within the compass of their calculation—they considered not the destructive struggle which this country must have experienced from the power of Britain, and the ferocity of France—they were willing after murdering peace to “jump the life to come”—they admitted not in their mind, the utter impossibility of England, in the zenith of her naval glory, remaining criminally negligent of her own safety, by allowing Ireland to become an unconnected state, or if connected, connected with her most deadly foe—it might have been Rome, but it could not have been Carthage; Ireland was too weak, too divided, and too totally without resources to have made even a decent stand in so dreadful a contention—she must have fallen unconditionally to Britain, or been devoured by France—they were shallow politicians, they seized in imagination the ultimatum of their projects, but forgot in their zeal the steps which were to lead them along—and so destruction must have proved the contest that it may be fairly doubted, if, in the almost impossible event of their success, even one political Quixotte could have been found on the land mad enough to legislate for her miseries.

But we are independent, and Mr. Foster tells us so—he tells the protestant that he is independent of English influence, and he tells the Catholic that he is independent of protestant power!

Mr.

Mr. Foster tells you you are independent, and in the same breath he tells you *whoever* (in the case of a Regency) is Regent of Great Britain must be Regent of Ireland, without her election, or her accedence in any manner whatsoever.* "*Whoever*," says Mr. Foster, "is Regent of Britain has the Great Seal, and *therefore* the Regent of Britain alone can represent the third estate of Irish legislature."

In 1789 the Commons of Ireland thought the country not quite so dependent, and they voted her a Regent without consulting either the Minister or the Great Seal of Great Britain; but in 1799 Mr. Foster tells you, you are independent, and proves this independency by a notable argument of your dependency on Great Britain!

But the word *Independence* is to act like a talisman against all evils; to lull the most sceptical into belief, and the most fearful into confidence—the wretch who groans under what is called legal proscription, is to read and feel himself free—and those who are not proscribed, are, on the simple pronunciation of the word, to fall down and adore, without daring to look up to its formation, or to examine its accurate applicability.

* It may be here urged, that this principle was enacted by the independent Irish Parliament—but is it not plain that this very act partially constituted and acknowledged her dependence?

Good God! are we independent? we, who have not a single ship of war in the world, nor contribute one shilling towards the expence of the British Navy, which protects our commerce, and defends our coasts! Are we independent—we who are not possessed of that necessary, tho' dangerous, engine of state safety, a military establishment? Are we independent, we whose Minister is never seen in the Corps Diplomatique, and whose country, if it has a name among the nations, is known only as an appendage to the power that protects it! are we independent, we whose very acts of parliament are not legal until they are banished the land, and return pregnant with constitutional authority, rendered legitimate by the impress of the Great Seal of Great Britain?

And is our parliament independent? Tell me what portion of the House of Commons, that main pillar of the Constitution, moves under the directing influence of places and pensions—the words are so hacknied, that one is almost ashamed to use them—but they are words of mighty power, and they are here *properly* applied. Mr. Conolly is a plain man, and an honourable man, and an honest man, and he roundly tells you that in such a constituted parliament you can never hope for independence of action—but even
allow

allow it to be, what assuredly it is not,* an independent body, one moment's reflexion will convince any unbiassed mind, that its *partiality* of Constitution carries poison to its root; it is, in truth, the smallest portion of the people, supported by an external power, legislating for and directing the great body of the community—without the support of that external power it could not maintain its political position—this is an acknowledged truth, then where is its independence? Ask the gentlemen who have places and pensions—and where is its proud, dignified, and virtuous generality? Apply to the Act of Proscription.—Ireland independent!——no—she is a province with another name—she has all the expence of a distinct legislature, without possessing the dignity and benefit of legislative distinction and national effect; and if she is not merged by Union into

* The present Earl of Clare, when Attorney General, declared in the House of Commons, that a late Opposition had cost the Country half a million; and that if the then Opposition was continued, it would cost the Country half a million more. What was this but plainly saying, we have taxed the people, to bribe the Representatives, in order to carry on the public business---and if you oppose the Government we must tax the people again for the same purpose. My Lord Clare was candid---he abhorred the practice---there is not an honest man in the state---he saw its necessity---and he is now a distinguished Advocate for the Union---because he sees that the working of, what is called the INDEPENDENCE of Ireland, will be the Ruin of the country.

British

British independence, she must continue a province.—Do not start at the word, but look at the accuracy of its application—the plan of her government originates with an external power, and this is from the nature of the connexion unavoidable—the Irish privy council may advise, but it is the British privy council that directs.*

Mr. GRATTAN, a great man, and a man for whom the writer of these pages entertains a sincere esteem, founded on a conviction of the purity of his motives, Mr. Grattan, I say, was hurried forward in his public career by the fever of patriotism acting on a warm, glowing, nay burning imagination—to a man of his transcendent talents nothing seems impossible—he has been much vilified, and much illiberal and gross abuse has been heaped upon him, but when he pleases he can rise and “shake the dew drops from the Lion’s mane.” His efforts have done much—they have enabled his country to treat on equal terms with Britain for an Union, which has for its object equality of rights, equality of security, and equality of existence. His subsequent exertions have not been so happy—but shall we forget the greatness of his former acts because his latter movements have been tinged with the errors of humanity? No! the mob of the people, ever giddy

* Under the controul of the Irish Parliament, under the controul of the ministerial Representatives---under the controul of British influence.

and

and inconstant, may be prompted to any folly, and the mob of the corporations may join the vulgar cry, and drive the kingly creature from his lair, but his services are enshrined in the hearts of the reflecting, the liberal and the enlightened part of the community, and the nobility of his nature will be recorded on that eternal page where virtue never dies!* He was the leader of that firm phalanx that gave to Anglo-Ireland the British constitution, but he soon discovered that the influence of Great Britain left his theoretical independence in practice a shadow, he combated this effect, the influence, the necessary influence, defeated his exertions: after his establishment of independence in theory he laboured to accomplish a radical reform in the lower house---he found the Constitution acquired in 1782, was nugatory without a radical reform of that parliament which acquired that

* Notwithstanding this tribute to the talents and service of Mr. Grattan, the Author could never be satisfied in his mind, as to the evidence of HUGHES before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords; it was there established both by HUGHES and NELSON that Mr. Grattan received them at Tenehinch, and communicated in secret with Nelson, and it would seem that he knew of the Conspiracy against the State, because he had a Copy of the Constitution of the United Irishmen lying upon his table.—Good God! what a debasement!--Mr. Grattan to communicate with such men as Nelson and Hughes!--but what criminality if he was privy to the Conspiracy!--I am willing to think he was ignorant of the latter, and I weep over the certainty that he descended to such associates!

Constitution,

Constitution---he was defeated by influence:---in order to weaken that influence, for he found it could not be destroyed, it was constitutional, he laboured to get the Catholic admitted into the sanctuary of the law; he saw the political equity and the national necessity for this great measure, but there was a state necessity for defeating that project, which seemed to escape his observation---*Protestant Ascendancy*.

Mr. Grattan, like a warm patriot, wished to see his country completely independent of Great Britain, and yet he found himself constitutionally compelled to keep up the *hocus pocus* of the essentiality of British connexion! this was playing off political legerdemain with a witness, and Mr. Grattan would have been a wonderful conjurer, indeed, had he shewn the world a state independent in all its relations under a constitutional necessity of connexion, to maintain that independency!---but presto---begone! influence, that protecting principle (I speak here in strict reference to the Protestant Establishment in Ireland) destroyed the embryo of a political monster, which had it seen the light must have wallowed in the blood of the community. Had his plan of government succeeded, the connexion between the two countries, so necessary to the salvation of both, could have had no lengthened duration of existence, because with two distinct and ruling principles in two distinct but constitutionally connected nations, you cannot

cannot in politics combine and preserve the reality of an undivided interest. Without meaning it, and certainly without wishing it, Mr. Grattan's latter exertions went directly to separation. I will not say that "pity shall find and weep over him;" but I will say that Patriotism has mourned the deception of her votary! and that the "hardy, bold, brave, brave, laborious, warm-hearted, and naturally faithful Irishman," has been plunged by party, and by the working of monopoly, into the horrors of a Rebellion, the blood of which is still reeking on the land! nor is the spirit fled—it skulks in silent hope of French assistance, and union, and union alone, can either render its re-appearance unavailing, or banish it for ever the soil. Party—party, working on the exclusive Charter of Protestant Supremacy, is the cause that has made "some men mad, and all men sick"—and the Irish Parliament are able constitutionally to restore reason to the lunatic, and loyalty to the Republican. They can "restore health to the sick, and confidence to all"—not by adding the French poison to reform the corrosive subliminate of party, but by blending in one *full, free, and entire* UNION, the *physical strength* and *constitutional Liberty* of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND. This is the Dove which has not been sent to the King, but he, in his parental care, has sent to us—it will take back the Olive! and our labouring bark may then rest in safety from the turbulence

lence of Faction, and the wild waves of democratic fury.

But it is urged, why unite! we have a trade as free as Great Britain to every part of the world—will Union enable us to do what we cannot do at present? “What part (says Mr. Foster), can a British ship go to from Britain, which an Irish ship cannot go to with the same cargo from Ireland?” she could—if *she had the cargo*. “What article great or small can a British ship import into Britain or Ireland that an Irish ship cannot import equally into Ireland or Britain?” but he immediately recollects himself and adds—I speak not of the East India Settlements, though Ireland is *as free* to them as Britain is.”—Is she indeed? I thought there existed an exclusive Charter, granted by the British Government to their East India Company, withholding from Ireland *any* commerce in the East; certainly not precisely *in terms*, but clearly and completely *in effect*. The British chartered Company have the sole right to trade in the East India Settlements, and exercise that sole right to their most particular advantage, and to the infinite benefit of the British Government. You bartered your right to that trade for a barren promise in 1785—and every ounce of Tea (that astonishingly productive, because perpetually consuming article!) that is used in Ireland, must first come through the Custom House of London.

Your

Your *Free Trade* was obtained in 1778, and it has worked so badly for the Country, that in 1800 you find yourself a Nation without a Capital! and what is the cause of this? The power of the State drawing against the power of the people, and the power of the people counteracting the power of the State—with the protecting care and encouragement of Britain, you have been able to establish a partial commerce in your only staple, but of general commerce the land has none. She has a rich soil, inviting harbours, great population—but little industry, because a divided people! and will Union accomplish what our present political system has not been able to acquire? It is rationally to be expected, for a complete Union, by doing away every impolitic jealousy, will give safety to the State, security to property, and industry to the people. Industry is the only road for a Nation to arrive at capital, and capital so accomplished cannot fail to encrease—thus Union, not a partial, but a complete Union, by securing the State, would secure the property of the individual; would give industry to our people, capital to our commerce, and enable us to improve all the advantages of our natural situation. While there is a theoretical distinction of government, there may be a practical distinction of interests, and where there may be a distinction of interests, there can be no stable unity of interests—a political misunderstanding may

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arise,

arise, and, like the whirlwind of the torrid zone, in a moment destroy the rich fruit of expectation. We have already had in the Regency business an example, very palpable to those who are willing to see, that distinctness of principles leads to, or or at least nourishes the seed of, separation. We say we are "one in unity of Constitution, and unity of Interest," and we persist in a principle which keeps alive the possibility of destruction to both! Why not destroy the principle that inherits the power to destroy the Constitution and the Interest, and by that means invulnerate the Constitution, and perpetuate the Interest? You acknowledge you can have no existence in separation from Britain, Why then venerate a principle that has the power to separate? Rather annihilate the principle, and render political separation impracticable. You say you are retarded by your high feeling of *independency*. Will you not allow your fellow creatures to have their feelings also? If you are retarded from Union, by the spirit and feeling of *independency*, may not the Catholic, your neighbour, catch one spark from your noble fire, and naturally be impelled with a hope and ardent longing to experience in his turn, the blessings of that feeling you so warmly extol? and can you without blushing, proclaim to Europe, that as a Protestant State you are absolutely independent of Great Britain? The Powers of Europe might hear, but they could never believe so monstrous an assertion—their knowledge is
against

against it. Supposing she were your foe, could you politically exist? You cannot truly say that Ireland is free, even according to your estimate of freedom, when two thirds of her people are excluded from the rights of the Constitution; and you cannot say that the Protestant Establishment in Ireland is independent, where her little commerce and her political being so notoriously move under the protecting arm of Great Britain. But the patriot cries—"perish Commerce, live the Constitution!"* it sounds well, but there is more sound than sense in the exclamation—perish commerce—what! perpetuate our poverty?—Live the Constitution.—How! by debasing the people?—No—no—May Commerce flourish, and the Constitution prosper, the rightful Constitution which gives equal liberty to all!—and it will prosper when it is supported *constitutionally* by Great Britain; both independent, because both blended into one—Ireland, not a limb which might be lopped off, but essential in the mass, and forming an indivisible portion of that vital blood, which circulates to the heart, and without which the Constitution sickens, and the body dies!

Of the Settlement of 1782, much has been said, and much has been written. Mr. Pitt denies it to have been final, and Mr. Foster asserts in detail, that it was *then* considered as a final measure. I am inclined to close in with the latter opinion;

* It is to be remembered that this was said of the Constitution of 1782—*which excludes the people.*

it was *then* considered final ; but did it in its virtue exclude the possible necessity of alteration ? What opinion could be entertained of the physician who after restoring a patient to health, would say, " Sir, you are now perfectly well—your Constitution is thoroughly established, and it is impossible that any thing can in future happen to make you sick—if, however, against this prediction, any symptoms of mortal disease should hereafter appear, die, Sir, die, rather than call in a physician."—Our opinion must be that the Doctor was a little deranged in his intellects.--The Settlement of 1782, was at that time final, and it gave Ireland an independency of Constitution which before she did not possess ; that independency of Constitution gave her power, or rather the right, to act for herself, and her enacting a Legislative Union will be an exercise of that right.

Had Union been enacted by the British parliament anterior to the Settlement of 1782--it would have been as legally binding on this nation, as any preceding legislative act of Britain binding this nation; but it would have borne on its front so imperious a tyranny, that Britain could never have rested upon it as a secure and founded measure ; Protestant Ireland would at all times have had a right to destroy that Union, because it proceeded from the will of another power, and bound her people without their consent. Lord Yelverton's argument in favour of the present measure is therefore strictly accurate and patriotic ; he would have op-
posed

posed it *then*, because of that exterior compulsion taking from him the motion of a free man, but *now* having the power to receive or reject, he exercises his freedom in embracing the measure, because he is convinced by his reason it is predominantly good.

— Did the Settlement of 1782 raise an eternal bar to future alteration and improvement? Might not alteration be necessary for the salvation of the State? And is it possible to improve without some degree of change? Was not the Constitution fundamentally altered at the Revolution? Did not Mr. Grattan—and I never mention his name without wishing to attach to it all the weight and respect his talents and his services so eminently deserve—did not Mr. Grattan with all the fervour of his genius shew the necessity of altering the Settlement of 1782, by reforming the representation of the people, and by a complete admission of the Catholic Body to the Rights of the Constitution? And did not Mr. Foster labour the alteration of what he now terms the *final* Settlement of 1782, in supporting with his talents, and with his vote the famous Propositions of 1785, one article of which went to bind Ireland by the legislative acts of Great Britain?—I am confident both these gentlemen felt a conviction they were acting for the improvement of the Constitution, and for the good of the people--- the true end of all legitimate government--- but surely Mr. Foster, when he supported the Pro-
[positions]

positions of 1785, forgot the first principle of the Constitution of 1782, which says, that no power on earth can legislate for Ireland, save only the Parliament of Ireland---It may be urged that the British acts which were to regulate for Ireland, were to be commercial only---idle talk! they would have been the acts of another Legislature binding this country, and therefore, not only an alteration, but an innovation destructive of the spirit and purity of the Constitution.

The Act of Union, whenever it shall pass, will be an act of the distinct Legislatures for perpetuating the British Constitution to both---it will be an act of political necessity, consolidating the strength and resources of the Empire, and by that consolidation securing, as far as human sagacity can secure, the *good of the people*.

Britain cannot give you up---you are necessary to her safety---and she is necessary ye protestants of Ireland! to your existence, yes---even to your natural existence:---if you are necessary, (and she confesses it) to her safety, is it her interest to destroy your power? and if she is necessary to your existence, (and who that reflects on the late tremendous combination against, at least, your political life, can deny that necessity?) is securing that existence an act of wisdom, or is it not? Union is an act of preservation to both.

If you deny the necessity, I proceed to prove it by facts which are in the memory of all men, and which no man can deny.

After

After an experience of seventeen years of your theoretical *distinction* of government, or rather of constitution, you find that *party*, fed by the *distinct* principle, and grown a monster of political power, has made such gigantic strides as to divide the land ; you find your distinction of government has led, with the event of the French revolution, to democratic principles ; you find that it has disgraced the nation by persecution on the one part, and fanaticism on the other ; you find that it has led to systematic treason and to open rebellion ; you find that it has encouraged the invasion and assisted the arms of the most formidable, ferocious, and faithless power in Europe ; you find that it has shaken your government almost to falling, and that to give it a momentary prop you have been driven to the dangerous expedient of ruling without law, and resting for your safety, not on the affections of the people, but on the bayonet of the soldier ! —and in these melancholy facts you have found your *independence* utterly unable to protect your property or to maintain your government ! —These are the fruits of that tree whose sap is empoisoned by its political separation, and under whose shade the ambitious, the turbulent, the factious, the domestic traitor, and the foreign foe, will find a perpetually inviting shelter—remove the cause and the effect will cease—blend the root and branches of your constitutional tree with that of Great Britain ; let them grow up into one body, consolidated

dated in all its parts. Peace may then repose in industrious security under its foliage, or war, if war will intrude, will find victory from its strength. This will be the sacred Tree of Liberty for the world to wonder at! Union cementing every fibre and penetrating every pore—not like the wretched plant of Gallic growth, watered with human blood, and springing but to paralyze the motions of genuine freedom; but like the British oak, nourished by a generous soil, and rewarding its cultivation by its protecting power to the remotest period of its political existence.

Of the terms of union nothing can be said because nothing is yet certainly known:—the uniting parties will form the conditions, and they must be liberal to Ireland, because for the attainment of security she resigns the right of managing herself: they must be liberal, because in the constitutional ear she resigns the name of independence; they must be liberal, because liberality and liberality alone will nurse her present feebleness into force, and give her real abilities their natural power; they must be liberal, from reciprocal interest—Britain cannot firmly stand without Ireland, nor can Ireland flourish without Great Britain.

The adjustment of the terms will not defeat the accomplishment of the measure; there is one part, however, which will require the most matured consideration of the Irish Parliament before their determination becomes final—I mean the number
of

of representatives, in the Imperial Parliament, for the Commons of this kingdom.

Here we must throw all retrospect of the numbers representing Scotland out of the question; it must not be argued, that because the Scotch are represented by forty-five members, the Irish ought to be contented with one hundred.—In an imperial measure of this magnitude national justice must ascertain and establish national interest—nay, it is for the interest of the empire that the people of this land should be satisfied not only in the general good policy of the measure, but in the liberality of all its particular branches.

The number of British representatives is five hundred and sixty-eight; the number of Irish representatives we shall for a moment set down at one hundred. I can find neither liberality nor equity in that arrangement, because it is evident the weight of one hundred bears no fair proportion to five hundred and sixty-eight; and by consequence their influence in the Imperial Parliament could not even form a check to any measure that might be thought to militate against the interest of this country. If you satisfy the people in the point of representation, a point absolutely necessary for the preservation of their legitimate rights, even party must abandon its clamour and opposition, because the people will then feel their interest is secured.—Now, one hundred members could make no stand in favour of this country against five hundred and sixty-eight, even supposing—(what never can happen)

pen) every Irish member to be directed in his public conduct by a conscientious discharge of his delegated duty—how then, is the proportion to be struck?—be cautious—this is the political wheel on which the imperial machine must move forward with ease, or be retarded in its progress! Is Great Britain superior in population and superior in riches, to admit an equal number of Irish representatives with the number she sends to Parliament?—No—but property in this question might fairly be left out of consideration---it is a fugitive good, and Ireland unquestionably would at this day have been possessed of more wealth had she actually possessed that British union of interests which her flatterers say she enjoys---it will be more liberal and better policy in Great Britain not to press the point of property. Let the proportion be drawn from the population of Ireland in reference to the population of Great Britain, taking the number of the British representatives as the just ratio for the British people. Every man in the land has an interest in the legislative body, because every man in the land is under the direction of the law,---he submits himself freely, for his own good, to its will---it is therefore that he contributes to the support of the constituted authorities, and makes a part of the mass that forms the power of the country :---If you estrange, by whatever means, the majority of that mass, you divide the power and endanger the community. Satisfy the people, and your union will be as immortal as the land on which they live.

By

By striking the proportion from the population you will also secure the representation of the property of Ireland, without invidiously setting the property of Great Britain against the wealth of Ireland as a reason for lessening her representation in the united Parliament. This will also meet the great measure of final emancipation to the Catholic, and render unnecessary any future augmentation of the delegated body. The population of Ireland is equal to half the population of Great Britain, the representation of Ireland should therefore be equal to half the representation of that country: this would be a representation of equity, of dignity, and of effect; Ireland would then from her equality of representation appear with her natural consequence in the imperial senate, and Great Britain would possess and feel the political and proper weight of her double number of members, equitably flowing from her double population.

This is the point, as to terms, the most important; the other branches of local regulation may have a fugitive effect, but this will have an eternity of consequence upon the satisfaction or discontent, the peace or war, the good or evil of the community. Rely upon it that reason will ultimately prevail;—the true question is, perfect union, general security, and liberal policy; or no union, insecurity, and political monopoly? there may be party opposition, there may be corporation clamour, but the question thoroughly understood, and the
representation

representation of this land dignified and secured by equitable proportion, will speak convincingly to the honest heart of every honest and industrious man in the nation.

Such is the miserable working of your distinct system and its boasted independency, that the mass of the people, the strength of the land, the true power of the state, stand neuter on the measure; their silence is a proclamation of their feelings. You have the catholic*, and the protestant is divided; he is divided, and why? not that union will destroy the British constitution in Ireland, for Ireland has not the British constitution! the sun is the vivifying principle of the world: his light, his warmth, and his benignant effects are unconfined, they are universal; the sentiment of 1782 was partial, it did not make Ireland free, it made the settlers, the protestants of Ireland theoretically independent of Great Britain, and it made the catholics of Ireland, the bulk of the people, practically dependent on the protestant government; it was not to Ireland the British Constitution; but it was a constituted monopoly of po-

* Since this was written the *Catholics* of Dublin (or rather the *tail* of the Dublin Catholic party,) have come forward, and entered into resolutions against the measure of Union: the meeting was not attended by 300 Catholics; 300 is a paltry proportion of the Catholic inhabitants of Dublin, and when opposed to the *thousands* of Catholics who have *publicly expressed their approbation of the measure*, their opposition and its effect must be feeble indeed!

litical power to the exclusion of the people, and it is the struggle to maintain and perpetuate that political power which now divides the protestant into two classes, the liberal and the bigot, the enlightened statesman and the sombre exclusionist! Are we never to have the reign of peace and generous principle between man and man, till the arrival of the millennium? or is man presumptuously to assume the station of omnipotence, and mark with an eternal line the abasement of his brother? What! and shall the protestant, whose very name conveys his love of general freedom, shall he labour to reign paramount in the land at the expence of Irish liberty? No—reason will ultimately prevail, and the millennium of the land will be the *union of the people*, as the millennium of the empire will be the *union of its parts*!

Ye Legislators! you are the pilots that must navigate our vessel at this momentous period of her voyage; you have seen the horrors resulting from the mutinous spirit on board; although quelled, it is not subdued; you have the bodies in your power, but extermination appals humanity, and even policy forbids it, for they are the strength of the crew, there might be danger in the attempt, and without them you could not navigate the vessel—The British man of war heaves in fight—she insures your safety—your vessel was originally formed of planks from her prow—she is herself at this moment something in want of repair—she reminds you of the ancient connexion,
and

and of your repeated declarations to swim or to sink in her company—she reminds you of the miserable distractions of your crew, encouraged by the ignorance of political bigotry, and fanned by the phrensy of religious fanaticism; she calls upon you loudly not to risk a total separation which a distinct navigation would indubitably produce: she wishes to save you from the French freebooters who swarm upon the main; she offers to take you on board as brothers, and so completely to blend her hull with yours, that the nicest eye should not be able to discover a difference; by mixing your crew with hers you strengthen both, and certainly secure your own salvation, for if you put to sea in your present state, with a mutiny on board, irons may do much, but where numbers prevail, punishment gives a compulsive ardour, and the spirit cannot be subdued: blend, therefore, blend with Britain, or your fate is inevitable; you will either be cut off, or perish on the fatal rocks of French fraternity.

Be wise, and seize the rope that your companion has thrown out to save you from sinking; seize it, and *pull together* till you board the Britannia and partake in the safe and undisturbed possession of her well constituted frame; that mighty vessel, trimmed by the consolidated weight of Ireland, would move forward in her course unimpeded by the storms of party, and impervious to the rash waves of republican experiment!

“ Throw, says Mr. GRATTAN, your *abuses* overboard,

board, and ballast with your *people*." And so must every man say who wishes well to his country: now, you cannot ballast with your people till you have destroyed the abuses, till you have destroyed the monopoly, that forward and frightful abuse which bears on its front the flaming cause of all our civil distractions! yet destroy it and the danger seems to increase. What! ballast with the people? give them the power of the state? and let the destruction of the domineering principle lead to protestant annihilation?

Behold the horrid dilemma, the legitimate offspring of a crooked policy!—theoretical distinction; partial ascendancy; general subjugation; external influence; insecurity; rebellion! away with the horrors of a proscriptive establishment! as the laws are equal to all, so should the right to make those laws be equal to the whole*;—To give the people their natural and rightful weight, yet still to maintain the protestant superiority, you must embrace a wide and liberal policy—you must sacrifice your phantom of independence on the altar of reason, and secure in return (for it is now within your grasp) the body of substantial freedom. You must look at the question of union in all its bearings, and open your mind to the conviction of your true situation—high sounding phrases and magnificent epithets may flatter a

* The Author does not here inculcate the wild doctrine of universal suffrage, but that the right of representation should be open to all sects.

portion of the people, but they do not constitute liberty; the partial rights of that portion prove the dependence of the people, and the necessary influence of Britain proves the dependence of that portion. The country that depends upon another at one time for money to support her government, at another time for fleets and armies to protect her state, and at all times for the essential influence of commercial regulation, is not a *free* country; but if we add to this, that the country so described is divided in itself—that the government is distinct from the people, and the people from the government—that there is no binding principle between the governors and governed, but on the contrary, that the principle of the government is, and must be, to *taboo* the people—when these facts are notorious, and felt by the land, who but must exclaim, what a horrible system of policy, and what a shocking picture of constitutional freedom! Your state absolutely resting and depending for its existence on a foreign power, and your people bound by laws to which they do not consent, and therefore absolutely in the power of your state!

“Things cannot remain as they are”—there is a weight in the land which oppresses the people, and which they will, from the feelings of nature, perpetually endeavour to throw off: with this convulsive principle in your body politic, how can that body, or its members, hope for tranquility or security?—It is an eternal bar to both, and can you rest upon force?—No—force may prevail
for

for a season, but where the tenure is held by compulsion, the legal right is abandoned, and possession will be regained by superior power.

“ Things cannot remain as they are”—You must give “ a constitution to the people, and a people to the constitution”—The hard and forbidding front of an excluding policy is the frightful parent of discontent, faction, rebellion; and its perpetuity is the perpetuity of those horrors which have (as Mr. Foster says) given Ireland a name among the nations!—Embrace a wide and liberal policy—we have survived the deluge; we have rested upon the Ararat of hope; we have wandered in the wilderness;—the political Pisgah is before us, and we have only to ascend and gain the promised land! But if we are a perverse and crooked generation, we shall be scattered into corners, and our folly shall become a jest among the nations of the earth!—Embrace a wide and liberal policy—You have a constitution without power, and a people without liberty; sacrifice the shadow for the possession of the substance; Incorporate with Britain, and let Union be the bond of National Good and Imperial Integrity.

FINIS.

